

Interviewee: Dorothy Lannom
Interviewer: Dolores Smith
Date of Interview: March 5, 1992
Transcriber: Jennifer Pustz

Dorothy Lannom
Side One

This is Dolores Smith [DS]. Today is March 5th, 1992. I will be talking with Dorothy Lannom [DL]. This is for the Friends of Stewart Library Oral History Project about Grinnell during the Depression and World War II, or during the 1930s and '40s.

DS: Dorothy, before we get into the '30s and '40s, I'd like to know about you before you moved to Grinnell, where you were born, and where you lived.

DL: I was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Would you like the date?

DS: If you want to give it.

DL: November 3rd, 1912. And it was Depression, I mean later on, so I went to Coe College and lucky to go to school, lived at home, and took home ec. And I came here to teach school in 1934, '35, '35, and '36. And I was very fortunate, I felt, to get the job over Ames graduates. So I taught two years and then I had met Sharp and got married, had four sons.

DS: And have lived in Grinnell

DL: And have lived in Grinnell ever since.

DS: Ever since.

DL: And times were tough. I made nine hundred a year, a hundred dollars a month. My dad and I paid back a school debt. I saved money because prices were relative, I mean my room was very reasonable, the food was very reasonable. Things weren't as high as they are now.

DS: How did you happen to come to Grinnell? Did you apply to lots of towns?

DL: I did. And the first year—I graduated in 1933 from Coe—and times were so tough that they were putting home ec and Music out of the schools, and so I worked in Cedar Rapids for a year at Killian's. And one day the head of the department, Miss Wikoff, called me and she said, "Would you like to, still want to teach?" And I said, "Yes, I do." "Well," she said, "there's an opening in Grinnell, and there's one in Minnesota." And there was one someplace else. And the year before I

had gone all over looking for a job, and at that point, I would have had to teach general science or English or something besides home ec. Well, Grinnell, it was just home economics so that was great. And, as I say, I was very pleased to get the job.

DS: How many other applicants were there?

DL: Oh, I don't know, but Ames has so much better home ec facilities and department than Coe. I knew John Ramsey here in Grinnell, and I knew Mrs. Ramsey. I had been over here to visit. So I came to apply to Mrs. McNally, Glenn Shifflett, Dr. Gallagher, Mr. Lannom, whom I didn't know at that point, and you know, I had to visit with all these school board members, and never dreamed I would get the job. I got home and they called me and said I had the job. [laughter]

DS: What was your maiden name, Dorothy?

DL: Williams. Dorothy Williams.

DS: When you were teaching, did all the girls take home ec, or just a few?

DL: Well, I had two classes, two morning classes and two afternoon classes, and they were full. Because they didn't have to take it, they thought it was going to be a snap course, and it is, and it was fun. We had a good time. And all the football boys wanted to, came, would come in and said, "Could we take home ec?" Well, they didn't do it much in those days. And I said, "Well, I just don't have room," but it would have been fun. But they wanted me to speak at the pep meetings and I just couldn't make a speech. I'd say to them, "I'll cook you a meal, I'll repair your uniforms, but I can't make a speech." So I finally got to the point that I'd stay up in my room because I was afraid they'd call on me. [laughter]

DS: And you taught both cooking and sewing.

DL: Uh-huh. And some clothing. Uh-huh.

DS: That's interesting about the clothing. What kind of clothes were girls making then?

DL: Well, of course, you start out in home ec, which is real silly, making an apron that has all kinds of embroidery on it. And they made simple dresses, and we tied and dyed table cloths and things, and they thought that was fun. And it was just skirts, pajamas, simple dresses, blouses.

DS: Girls wore dresses to school.

DL: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. You didn't see any slacks in those days. The funny part of it was the teachers could not smoke, but the students did. They'd go over to Candyland to smoke, but of course the teachers couldn't, which was kind of different than it is nowadays. [laughter]

DS: Where were you living then?

DL: Well, the first year when I taught, I lived at Mrs. A. D. Talbott's on Broad Street, on the corner there. I can't think of the address now. And the second year, I lived with Mr. and Mrs. Gregson, and that was on Main Street, a little bit closer to town. And I was so short that I wore high heels all the time so I'd be taller than my students. [laughter] But it was loads of fun, I enjoyed it thoroughly.

DS: Well that's why the kids liked it.

DL: Yeah, they did. It was fun. We had a good time. It was really fun. And I was young then.

DS: Were there many other women on the high school faculty?

DL: Oh yes. Oh yes. Rose Rule, Hannah McIlrath, Irene Cook, Clara – she was, Philips, Clara Philips. She was Music. And there were a lot of women. Rubert Hawk was pr – , well, Humphrey, Mr. Humphrey was superintendent when I first came and then Rubert Hawk was pres – was superintendent for a while, and then he went up to the college. And his brother Tommy Hawk taught here when I was here.

DS: Tommy Hawk?

DL: Uh-huh. Francis, they called him Tommy.

DS: Would your – I should ask about the women in schools, that's probably the major job that women had at that time, was it?

DL: Absolutely. Now, with home ec, you can go in all kinds of fields, design, child care, lots of things. Well, then, in those days, it was teaching. That's about all there was.

DS: And any other working women in Grinnell, what did they do?

DL: Well, they worked at the glove factory, making gloves, at a sewing machine place upstairs at the glove factory. And of course women clerked in stores. And that's about it.

DS: Was your salary equal to the men teaching at that time?

DL: I really don't know. But other places, little towns around it would be like eighty dollars a month, so I thought a hundred dollars a month was wonderful. [laughter] So, I don't know about the other teachers. I'm sure the men got more than the women, but I don't know that for sure.

DS: That was 1934

DL: '34

DS: When you came at a hundred dollars.

DL: And that's what I had the two years I was here, nine hundred dollars for nine months.

DS: Did you back and forth to Cedar Rapids on weekends then?

DL: Some, except I was having a nice time here, and my mother and dad were in Cedar Rapids and so of course I did go over often. But –

DS: Were there lots of young people in Grinnell to meet and be with?

DL: Oh yes. Oh yes. There was lots, lots of fun, because people weren't getting married because it was the Depression, and it was kind of a hard time. So there were lots of get-togethers and picnics and have popcorn and go to the movies and lots of fun things to do.

DS: Did you meet your husband-to-be very soon after you came here then?

DL: I had met him before, when I was still at Coe, I had come over here with another friend and had met him. And so we just saw each other, we didn't think it was serious at all, and then finally it was. And so we – I taught two years and then we got married, 1936.

DS: Nineteen thirty-six was, I guess you'd say, in the depths of the Depression, wasn't it?

DL: Oh my, I should say. You could go to the picture show for ten cents. You could stop at the Dixie Inn, which was a place where most of the teachers ate plate lunches at noon for ten cents, get chili for ten cents.

DS: Where was that?

DL: Well, it was right where you know where Dr. DeMeulenaere's office was, down on the corner, on Sixth Avenue and Broad Street. It was called the Dixie Inn, and they had plate lunches for a quarter that were delicious, I mean a really meal for a quarter. And the tavern was over where the nursing home is on Sixth Avenue. And Mrs. Eichhorn ran the Tavern. And you could eat there for fifty cents. And we just didn't have enough money to eat there all the time. But she would have fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, salad, vegetable, home-made rolls, for fifty cents. So it was, as I say, the prices were relative. You didn't have to make as much money because it didn't cost as much to do things. But it was an interesting time.

DS: And that's one of the things that you did when you were dating then?

DL: Uh-huh. Well, no, the teachers would meet there on Sunday. We would go to church and then we'd meet at the Tavern. Because I say we couldn't do it every day. Marjorie Case was teaching here when I was. She was over at Parker School, which is now gone, and there was a gal from Newton that came to teach math in the junior high school, Betty Redman was her name. She's now Betty Fisher and we became very close friends, and we still keep in touch. They live in Charlottesville, Virginia, and she, they come here, she and her husband, and I go there.

DS: Well, tell me a little about your wedding. Since it was during the Depression, was it a big wedding?

DL: Yes, it was. The Congregational Church in Cedar Rapids, and it was a new church. It was beautiful. It was red brick with, the interior was all white with red runners. And Reverend Dryer was his name, and he was a young, very nice person. And of course, being a home ec major and the Depression, I made my wedding dress. We made all the bridesmaids' dresses. It was a large wedding. Lots of people came from Grinnell because it wasn't too far. And I remember, Rubert Hawk was Sharp's groom. And Sharp and I drank cokes, and Sharp was just so mad at the Roosevelt Hotel, which was fairly new, cokes were ten cents. And that was almost unheard of. [laughter] They were a nickel anyplace else. But we had a nice, nice wedding, and nice reception. And we went up to Ely, Minnesota, on our honeymoon.

DS: Fishing?

DL: Well, no. August is not a good time to fish. And Sharp had hayfever. That's why we went to Ely. And he was not much of a fisherman because it's not good in August. But it was – it's a lovely place and we still have the place and the boys have a place. And we all love Ely, Minnesota.

DS: So you went to a cabin owned by –

DL: Mr. Lannom.

DS: Mr. Lannom. Tell me a little about the Lannom family. When did they come to Grinnell?

DL: Well, my husband was twelve years old when they came from Tennessee. Tullahoma, Tennessee. Mr. Lannom had a woolen mill and a tannery that made baseballs. And in Grin – then he came up here when the glove factory, Morrison-Shults was in trouble. And he –

DS: What year was that?

DL: Well, I'm not positive. Sharp was – It was nineteen-tw – He was twelve years old, and he would be eighty-one now, so a long time ago. And Martha was sixteen, his sister. And, of course, they talked very southern, and I of course didn't know them, any of them then. But Mr. Lannom took over the glove factory and made a success of it. And then the shoe factory was here, which you probably don't remember.

DS: Was that already here before he came?

DL: No. No, no. He started that. And it was very unsuccessful. And they closed it, they thought, because people went out on strike and that wasn't true. It

was just because it wasn't making any money. But it scared people, so the rest of our companies don't have any unions.

DS: I see. Well, I remember the shoe factory and that closed after 1950.

DL: Yes, uh-hum. My husband ran it for a while, and then when Mr. Lannom died, he ran the glove factory and Martha and Chuck Parish had moved to Tullahoma. Chuck managed the baseball factory, which was much more lucrative than either of the ones here.

DS: Well, when the older Mr. Lannom—his name was also Sharp, wasn't it?

DL: Uh-huh. He was junior. My husband was the third.

DS: Your husband was the third. And so your son is Sharp the fourth?

DL: Yes. [laughter] He said, there'll never be a fifth and there hasn't been.

DS: Well, when Mr. Lannom junior, then, moved to Grinnell, did he still keep the factory in Tennessee?

DL: Oh yes, oh yes. Of course that was the thing that made money, baseballs.

DS: I see, but he had the glove factory here. How many did that employ.

DL: I just really don't know. They have some pictures down at the factory of the women upstairs where the machines were, and with their old fashioned clothes and their shirt waists and their long skirts, you know, quite a few. But, then the glove factory was very successful for quite a while, and then finally it got to the point where people didn't wear that kind of gloves anymore.

DS: What kind of gloves were they?

DL: Well, they had leather gloves, not work gloves. Originally, they made driving gloves. They've got some in the cases down at the factory, you know where in the old cars, the first new cars, where you'd have long gauntlet gloves. There's some pictures down there, if you want pictures. And they had a factory in Gloversville, New York, which was table-cut gloves, which were fine leather gloves. And they had a lot of salesmen all over the country.

DS: So they did sell all across the United States?

DL: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah, they had lots of salesmen.

DS: Where did they get the leather?

DL: Oh, they'd buy it from different tanneries. In Tullahoma. Mr. Lannom had a tannery so he could get some of it there. But the fine leather was from different tanneries. And there's, there was also a glove company, factory that Mr. Lannom owned in Lynchburg, Tennessee, which is real close to Tullahoma. But—

DS: Well, the glove factory then was a source of employment for—

DL: Oh, I should say. For Grinnell. It's over a hundred years, you know. It's long, it's the oldest company in Grinnell. So they've always hired people. I think they have four hundred now in the DeLong, that they hire here.

DS: How did that happen to be called the DeLong factory?

DL: Well, when my husband died, my oldest son was in Scotland on a Rotary fellowship. He was going to law school. And when my husband died, I called him and I wanted him to come home, but I wanted him to go back and finish the program. But he was all packed up to stay home, because somebody had to run the business. So he came home and it took him a year to learn everything, because the boys had always worked at the factory one time or another. So, eventually he acquired DeLong jacket business. Chuck DeLong had it and my son acquired it. And it's been quite, well, he's been here thirty years, I mean at the factory, Sharp has. He's been running it for thirty years. And it wasn't right at the first, but, as I say, the shoe factory and the glove factory weren't very profitable. So he had an opportunity to buy the DeLong factory and so that's the name we used, because Lannom Manufacturing Company is in Tullahoma and we couldn't use that name.

DS: What was the glove factory called?

DL: Morrison-Shults.

DS: Morrison-Shults. But were there people by that name, Morrison and Shults, working in it when you came?

DL: Oh, yes. Frank Shults was one of the owners. And the Morrison's, well, they lived up there by where the black house is, Grinnell College, you know, on the corner of Park and Tenth. And young Frank Shults, that teaches school here and is very musical, was Frank Shults's son.

DS: Oh, I didn't know that. Well, then, Mr. Lannom junior, Sharp junior, just came as what, a business manager?

DL: Oh no, he was going to buy it, but of course he had to borrow money and he had to watch everything, because sometimes factories, companies would pay too big salaries so they couldn't make it, you know. So he was very frugal and very smart and he had the factory.

DS: Well, when did your husband start working there, then?

DL: Well, my husband went to school in Philadelphia, went to Wharton School of Business and came back when he graduated from college and worked for his father. So that was before we were married in the '30s, and he was working for his father when I came here to teach school.

DS: He was working in the glove factory then?

DL: Uh-huh.

DS: But then they also started the shoe factory.

DL: And he ran the shoe factory. And it was during the war, and of course, nobody knew how to make shoes here. And they made shoes for people in the service. I mean, they sent them overseas. And they weren't very well-made, but it's like the Red Cross, they'd take anything you could make for them. So that kept them busy for quite a while.

DS: Were there men's and women's shoes?

DL: Just women's, no men's, just women's. Sport shoes. Well, saddle oxfords were their big thing in those days, and moccasins.

DS: Did anybody in Grinnell sell them?

DL: Oh yes, Margaret Arnold.

DS: Did she?

DL: Oh, I should say, yes. She could just go right down to the factory and get what she needed.

DS: And about how many people did that factory employ?

DL: I really don't know. I expect a hundred or more, I just don't know. But at least people had jobs, you know, because it was hard times.

DS: How do you think the Depression affected you family? Do you think that you were probably better off than others because your husband, well, first of all, when you got married, were you still allowed to teach?

DL: Oh no, I didn't, I could probably have, but I didn't want to. I mean, we didn't start a family right away but I was busy. And, no, I never did teach again.

DS: There was no policy against women teaching?

DL: I don't think you could, really, if you were married, I don't think you could, but I didn't even try because I didn't want to. And we were very frugal and I knew how to do budgets and everything. And we, Sharp made very little money, and Mr. Lannom had a policy that everybody that worked for him in the office, and salesmen, some of them, had to save a hundred dollars a month for a year. Well, by the time you've saved that for a year, you've kind of learned how to save, and that made a lot of difference.

DS: That was a lot to save.

DL: That was a lot of money. He made, my husband, you want things like this? My husband made \$175 a month, we saved a hundred dollars a month for a year. Well, the first year after you're married, you don't need a lot of clothes, and hopefully you won't have a lot of illnesses, and he did have a new car, so we didn't

have to do payments on that. So we managed fine. And I would go every Friday to the grocery store and get my groceries and if we ran out of eggs or something, I didn't go until the next Friday. And I think I would spend like twenty dollars a week for everything.

DS: Twenty dollars a week, and yet you –

DL: We saved a hundred.

DS: You were living on seventy-five dollars a month. Wow. Were you paying rent?

DL: No, Mr. Lannom gave Martha Parish and myself the duplex on Main Street. Of course, that was very fortunate for us. Martha and I did pay fifteen dollars a month to take care of the insurance and upkeep. Well, you see, that made it pretty nice for us. And –

DS: And where was that, Dorothy?

DL: Well, it's, it was 1312, 1314 Main Street. Still a duplex. Used to have a big porch around the front of it, but not anymore.

DS: The first block north of Sixth Avenue, is that right?

DL: No, no, no, it's more than that. 1312 is, let's see, one, two, about the third block.

DS: I see. Well, you were pretty much family oriented then.

DL: Very much so. And Chuck traveled for Mr. Lannom, sold baseballs, and Martha would go out to California to travel with him before she had her children, and then they'd come back when – they didn't – you don't sell the whole year. You'd come back for several months, and they'd live in the duplex next to us.

DS: Was that the only baseball factory in the United States?

DL: Oh no, no, no, no. Spaulding, Wilson, there are all kinds of baseball companies.

DS: But this one was called what?

DL: Ah, Worth – , Worth Balls. They made Worth baseballs. W-O-R-T-H.

DS: But distributed nation-wide.

DL: Uh-huh. And they sold a lot of baseballs to minor leagues, they weren't, you know, selling to the major leagues. But it's very, it was a very good company and made lots of money.

DS: When did your children start arriving?

DL: Well, young Sharp was born in 1938, and Tom, four years later, and Bill, two years later, and Chad, four years later. So, they were kind of spread out.

DS: So, you were the queen bee, weren't you?

DL: Yeah, with all these men. We moved out here in 1948.

DS: Out here being east of Grinnell.

DL: Yes. And Mr. F. A. Jones had built this house in 1940. And we had just three boys then. And, of course, Sharp and I didn't know anything about farming, or — Mr. Jones had two cows. The boys and Sharp had to learn how to milk cows. We had chickens, never knew anything about any of those things. So, it was good for the boys. They learned how to work and —

DS: So they did have chores then?

DL: Oh-h-h-h-h, did they! They had to take care of the cows, they had to take care of the chickens, whether it was twenty below or not. So they learned.

DS: How old was your son, Sharp, when you moved here?

DL: Nine. And Tom was five and Bill was three. And then Chuck was born four years later.

DS: And that was in 1948, you said.

DL: Uh-huh, when we moved out here, uh-huh.

DS: Well, getting back to when you lived on Main Street, did you have a garden?

DL: No. We did out here, but we didn't on Main Street, so we didn't know anything about those things. And of course in those days, if people would stop in you would have a cup of coffee, or a Coca-Cola. You didn't — nobody thought of serving liquor. There was no liquor store here anyway. And so it was very simple, simple living, fun. You made your own fun. And the country club was very active and they had nice parties and things, but it was very simple. It wasn't very expensive.

DS: And you being a home ec teacher, you were a good cook.

DL: Well, I hope so.

DS: After you were married, did you eat out much?

DL: No. It was too much trouble to get the boys all cleaned up to go. And, oh, I did a lot of church luncheons and things like that. And did most everything there is do in Grinnell, which I'm pleased about.

DS: Did you, before your children were born, did you do any traveling as a couple?

DL: We went to Puerto Rico once. They had a glove, or baseball factory in Puerto Rico and I had never been to too many places, so Puerto Rico was quite a thrill. We did go to New York a couple of times on business and saw some plays and

things. We'd go to Ely, Minnesota, for our vacations in August. And that was about the extent.

DS: Well, that was a nice place to go every year.

DL: Oh, it was lovely. And it still is. We all just love it.

DS: Did you feel that Grinnell was really hurting during the Depression?

DL: No, not really. I mean, people were—had jobs and they were— We didn't have any slums or any poor people on the streets like you see today. No, and people had gardens, you know, if they needed to. And I can't remember that it was ever in bad shape at all.

DS: Did you feel that you might have been luckier than some, though?

DL: Well, I'm sure we were, and some people felt that, which is kind of too bad. But we tried not to let people feel that. And the boys had a few rough times, because when we moved out here, we had it a little bit rougher, some of the kids—

DS: Do you remember, well, you said there were no slums or—I'm sure there were probably some people who didn't have jobs, and I'm wondering if, were you aware of any welfare organizations, or—?

DL: Not really. My sister-in-law, Martha Parish, and I would go call on people, because people needed coal and we would check. And a few places on the south end of town weren't kept up, and seemed like they were kind of poor, but not very many. There just wasn't the hardships because most people had jobs. Most people, not everybody, I'm sure.

DS: I've heard the name Sam Reagan mentioned and I think—

DL: Yeah, he was in the welfare.

DS: He was in welfare.

DL: That was later.

DS: Do you know who he worked for, was it the state or the county?

DL: I would say the state, but I couldn't— Sure, I remember him, Sam Reagan, but I don't really remember.

DS: Did you work in volunteer jobs at all?

DL: Oh, yes. I worked for the hospital. I volunteered out ther. I was president of the auxiliary one year and worked for the church and did a lot of things.

DS: What did the hospital auxiliary do?

DL: We provided money for things that they needed at the hospital. And when it first started, oh, they would have their meetings in a home, you know, and have pot luck or something, just a small group of people. And then later on, it got to be two hundred and three hundred and then later on, people from Brooklyn and

Montezuma and all around belonged to the auxiliary, so it really was quite a thing. And the board would tell the auxiliary what they needed, and we would raise a thousand, two thousand dollars and buy it for them. I was on the hospital board for six years and so we knew what they needed. And the auxiliary furnished a great deal.

DS: Now, which hospital was this?

DL: Well, it was the Community Hospital.

DS: Community. And the St. Francis had an auxiliary?

DL: I presume, they did. And of course they feuded, which was too bad.

There should never have been two hospitals in a little town like this, because it kind of split people and the town at some point. But it's all one now.

DS: Were there any other dividing factors?

Side Two

DL: Dr. Nollen, Dr. John Nollen was president of the college at that point and he and Mrs. Nollen would entertain town people. And they lived in the president's home that is there next to the Methodist Church. And they were trying to get people, and they did, they did a marvelous job of getting, well, now of course it's called Town and Gown, but then it was Town and College. And they did a great job. And they're the ones that started having dinners at their home with college people and town people. And it was a wonderful thing, because the town couldn't get along without the college.

DS: That's right. The college at that time was pretty much affiliated with the Congregational church.

DL: That's right, uh-hum, uh-hum.

DS: Did any of the events, did they share events, the church and the college?

DL: Well, I think the college, I don't know whether at that point or not, would use the high school's auditorium, because they had a good stage at the high school. And I think they used—helped each other that way and used things back and forth. And of course the high school played football up on the college field, because the high school didn't have one. And they used the basketball, the old Darby Gym basketball. So they did help each other, and that was in the, oh, '30s, '40s. But, so they got to the point where, I think now, there is a wonderful feeling between the college and the town.

DS: What about rural people and town people? Were there—

DL: Well, some, some. But, I mean, a little town like this, the people you knew in the country, they were just like town people. They had a—the first—the year we moved out here, they had something at the Congregational Church and it was called “Town and Country.” [laughter]. And the debates. And I know we had just moved out here and my husband was supposed to be on the Town, because we had just left the town, debate, and we had worked so hard getting moved in and everything and all of us went to the program. I can’t remember what they even debated about now, but it was kind of cute. “Town and Country.”

DS: And at that point you were country.

DL: We were Country, but we had just moved that day so we were still called town, I guess. [laughter] And we were only half a mile out anyway.

[tape stops and restarts]

DS: —ask you about when the boys were born, were they born in the hospital?

DL: Oh, yes, in the hospital. Sharp was seven pounds, six ounces, Bill and Tom were six-thirteen and six-fifteen, and Chad was my problem child, he weighed eight pounds and something, he was a big boy.

DS: How long did you stay in hospital?

DL: Oh, two weeks! My husband would go down to the office and say, “I’ll pay for two weeks but no longer.” And you didn’t get up, you didn’t get up at all. When I got home, he would carry me up and down the stairs, which, of course, they don’t do anything like that anymore. [laughter]

DS: Did you have help at home then to take care of the babies.

DL: A little, not much, a little. Not too much.

DS: Well, it was a big event, wasn’t it?

DL: Oh, my, I should say, oh my, it certainly was.

DS: As the boys grew up and went to school, were you involved in school PTA?

DL: Oh, yes. Cub Scouts, PTA, we went to all the football games, all the basketball games. Didn’t ever miss anything. It was fun.

DS: Was there a lot of interaction between parents and schools?

DL: Oh, absolutely. In those days, there wasn’t television, and there wasn’t things to distract you so you did with your families. You had picnics, and you went on vacations, and you attended the schools and you helped out as much as you could.

DS: Do you feel there were discipline problems in schools?

DL: Nothing like today. I'm sure there were, but there wasn't the drugs or the drinking or anything like that. It was a real nice time to be raising your children. I'm sure it's very difficult now.

DS: When World War II came along, how did that affect Grinnell?

DL: My husband went— Well, very much so, I mean, lots of people were drafted. My husband went to Des Moines to see about getting a commission in the Navy and they said we were in a, what do you call it—?

DS: Necessary?

DL: A necessary business. We were making shoes. We were sending shoes overseas. So he didn't have to go, which I was glad because I had two children then.

DS: Did you feel that the economy was changing with the war?

DL: Oh, I think so. Of course we all had to stand in bread lines, you had shoe, you know, coupons that you could only buy so many shoes at a time. And it didn't bother us. I started to bake bread, which I never had done very much of before, just because it was bothersome. The bread was ten cents but you still had to stand in line to get it. And, oh, sugar and coffee and everything was rationed. But it— so many people would buy half a dozen cans of coffee when normally they'd only buy one until they ran out, and then they would buy another one. But people tried to hoard, you know. With sugar and things like that, but it wasn't necessary. We weren't hurt at all, really, like the poor people in other countries. But you didn't feel it in Grinnell.

DS: There were service men on the campus, weren't there?

DL: Oh yes, they had an OCS school here. And when we lived on Main Street, they would march in front, on Main Street, you know, and all these soldiers. And it was quite interesting. They were here for quite a while. They lived in barracks on the campus.

DS: So, you did feel, you knew the war was going on.

DL: Oh, yes, oh yes. But it didn't hurt us, I mean, it didn't bother us. They weren't any problem. They were nice young men. You didn't even see them very much except when you'd see them marching or if you'd go down to the hotel dining room, a wonderful place to eat in those days, and you'd see them down there. But they didn't cause any problems.

DS: Do you feel that either the war or the Depression brought people closer together?

DL: I do, I do. And I think most of our children nowadays, they wouldn't know how to handle a depression. I think most of the children have way too much. I

think they're spoiled, I think they watch too much television. I just think ours was an easier era.

DS: Getting back to the entertainment, we didn't have television. Did you listen to the radio much?

DL: Oh, yes, you bet. And went to the movies, that was your entertainment. Oh, I can remember the first television that came to Grinnell, Larry and Snap James had it, and it was a round tube, about this big. And we'd go in there and watch it. And then finally we got one. The kids loved it of course.

DS: What radio programs did you listen to?

DL: Oh, "Fibber McGee and Molly," "Phil Harris," "Jack Benny." They were wonderful. Usually Sunday night, we would have cereal or something and we would sit out here in the kitchen and listen to the certain programs on radio.
[laughter]

DS: And what about music, what kind of music did you like?

DL: Well, we had a nice Magnavox music, good records, and we loved music. And Sharp and I both loved to dance, he was a wonderful dancer.

DS: Were there dances in town?

DL: Oh, at the Country Club and the Elks Club. We didn't go to the Elks Club too much. My husband was a member but we'd go to the Country Club and dance. And then my husband was in charge of DeMolay for about twenty-five years.

DS: What's DeMolay?

DL: Well, it's part of the Masons, Masonic Order for young people. And so we'd always chaperon their dances, and we'd chaperon dances at the high school when they had dances, you know. So we got a lot of dancing done.

DS: The high school at that time was on Park, between Fourth and Fifth, is that right?

DL: Uh-hum, uh-hum.

DS: Where the Community Center is now.

DL: That's right. That's where I taught school.

DS: Well, DeMolay was a boys' organization, wasn't it?

DL: Yes, yes.

DS: Tell me about some things, women's clubs, I think they've been important in Grinnell.

DL: Very. I happened to belong to Priscilla Club that's a hundred years old this year and we're having our centennial and big to-do. And of course, there were, there was only one PEO chapter here at that point, early on. And there was, oh, there

were so many clubs. There were like twenty-some, thirty-some clubs, because when I was president of the Auxiliary, we would send a note to every one of them to give us money for the Auxiliary and to pay their dues and so forth and so on. So there were lots of clubs, lots of bridge clubs. Women played bridge. They'd have sixty people out at the Country Club, four or five women had bridge parties. You didn't even know who the hostesses were. But it was very, very active. People played golf. The Country Club's been there for a long time. And the golf club was very popular. And of course, when Oakland Acres started, now lots more people played golf than they ever did before, which is wonderful I think.

DS: What did some of the woman's clubs do?

DL: Well, the Priscilla Club buys children's books for the library. And I'm not positive what Drummond and some of the others do. But PEO is an educational group and they do a lot for education. And of course the Auxiliary, you had your meetings, and the church meetings, you had Women's Fellowship meetings. So there was always lots to do. And in those days, the men had their meetings. There was Poweshiek Club, Mason—Masons, and Sharp had DeMolay, and Elks, and there were a lot of things. And the women had theirs. Now the young people aren't interested in ritual. And I think it's better because I think they do things as families now. The men don't go off to a meeting and the women don't go off to a meeting. But that's what we did in that era.

DS: Were the churches important?

DL: Oh, very, oh, very, you bet.

DS: For a family?

DL: Yes, uh-huh. Sunday school, going to church. And of course we have lots of churches in Grinnell, as you know. But we were very active in the Congregational Church, and I taught Sunday school and things like that.

DS: When you first came to Grinnell, was Saturday night downtown a big night?

DL: I guess so. We didn't go downtown on Saturday night. We might go to a movie, but of course Saturday night was the big night in little towns. Now it isn't. Now it's quiet, you drive down there—anybody down there. But the stores aren't open like they used to be. But Saturday night used to be a big night.

DS: Well, tell me what your typical Sunday would have been in the '30s?

DL: Well, we'd go to church, children go to Sunday school, and we'd come home and have Sunday dinner, and kids would play outdoors if it was nice. The older ones had bicycles, I guess, they would ride. My husband didn't play golf, so—I

did, but not very well. But I wouldn't—we didn't play golf together or anything like that. But we had people over and we played cards and we visited and they—people would call on us and we'd call on them. And it was, as you say—we'd listen to the radio. And it was just a nice time.

DS: Family day.

DL: Family, yeah.

DS: What about shopping? Did, for instance, for your clothes—you've always dressed so nicely, Dorothy.

DL: Well, thank you.

DS: Did you buy your clothes in Grinnell?

DL: As much as I could. I was used to Cedar Rapids. I knew some of the people over there yet. And I preferred to go to Cedar Rapids than Des Moines. And I like to buy things in Grinnell if you can. Sometimes you can't. But Cedar Rapids, if I shopped, is where I would go probably.

DS: Were there any women's dress—

DL: Oh, yes, Virginia Swisher. Do you remember Virginia Swisher? She had a beautiful shop downtown where, I don't know whether it's where Arnold Shoes was, or the next one to it, Strand's, maybe, on Fourth Avenue. And she had lovely clothes. And of course, the college people and the town people shopped with her a lot. And in those days, [if] a dress was twenty-five dollars, that was just terrible! When I was teaching school and I paid that, it was really something. Well, of course, that's nothing now. But she had beautiful clothes. And then she moved up next to the funeral home on Park, I believe that is. Or is that Broad?

DS: Broad.

DL: Broad. And she had a nice dress shop there. And a lot of college kids and people would come over from Newton and different places because she had very good taste in clothes.

DS: What about other stores? Were there department stores?

DL: Well, the Broadway was a department store, and it was there about where Cunningham's plumbing is.

DS: On Broad Street?

DL: On Broad Street. And it was a nice large department store. And Hattie and Jack Sangster ran that while I was there. And then right along there, was called, when I was teaching here, was called the Blue Bird, on Broad Street, next to that. And that was a place to eat. You'd go there for lunch or meals, excellent food because it was all home-made, you know. You just didn't buy everything from the

store. And it was called the Blue Bird. We used to eat there a lot. But the Dixie Inn was where most of the teachers ate. And Ronald Reagan came into the Dixie Inn one day. He was a sports announcer in Des Moines, and he was visiting one of the teachers. Of course, we didn't think anything about it, because we didn't know who he was. Thought he was nice looking, but we were in there and he was in there, sitting, having a cup of coffee with this teacher. [laughter]

DS: So you didn't get his autograph?

DL: No, I wish I'd have known!

DS: So you did do some shopping in Cedar Rapids?

DL: Uh-huh, and Des Moines, but mostly Cedar Rapids if I had to go out of town for something.

DS: The groceries you got in Grinnell?

DL: Usually, at the United. Claire Strand ran the United. It's where Pagliai's Pizza is now.

DS: On Fifth Avenue.

DL: Um-huh. And when I was teaching here, I was supposed to buy groceries at all the grocery stores, which I did.

DS: Now, who – why? Did they tell you that?

DL: Oh, yeah. They wanted me to share with everybody, because we bought quite a few groceries for the girls to do their foods.

DS: I see, for the school.

DL: For the school, and home ec, uh-huh. So, I tried to shop around. McNally's had a meat market and grocery store, and United. I'm trying to think of some of the others. Well, there was an A&P at one time where, you know, where Chuck Manly's office is there on the corner.

DS: That would be Fourth and Main.

DL: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And there were several grocery stores. This, I don't think this little one out here on Sixth Avenue, was here then. But there were nice grocery stores. And, of course, Claire Strand ran his for a long, long time.

DS: Were you given any other – now this was, of course, because of the home ec department with the food. Were you given any personal rules when you came as a teacher?

DL: No, except that you couldn't smoke. That's the only thing that women and men couldn't do. Men couldn't either.

DS: Men couldn't either?

DL: Oh, no. Well, you know, they did, but that was kind of silly. They don't do that –

DS: But you were not expected to go to church particularly?

DL: Oh, no. They didn't give you any rules. We did go to church because there wasn't very much to do. So Sunday morning you'd go to church and then, if you could afford it, you'd go to the Tavern for lunch or for dinner. Dinner, big dinner.

DS: What about politics, Dorothy? Have you been involved in politics through the years?

DL: Yes, my husband was, and I have been, and I'm a staunch Republican. My husband was county chairman for quite a while. And I've always worked – we used to have to vote out at the little school out here. We're in Grant Township. And there was a little country school, and we had to vote out there. And I never will forget Sharp was at Northwestern, and it was the first time he could vote and it was by absentee. And we had stay until everything was all finished, until they would go through the machines, you know, to hear, "George Sharp Lannom the fourth." [laughter]. It was fun to hear his name. So, we've all been active, all my sons have been active in politics.

DS: Were you active even in the '30s when Roosevelt was –

DL: Oh yes. My goodness sakes we were against Roosevelt and for, was it Landon back then?

DS: Alf Landon.

DL: Alf Landon from Kansas. Oh, yes, we worked hard.

DS: How did you feel about Hoover?

DL: Oh, we liked Hoover. Of course, there were so many bad things said about him, but he was a Republican, so I like Republicans! I liked Hoover.

DS: So, you probably – Well, how did you feel about Roosevelt?

DL: Didn't like him. Thought he was terrible.

DS: And some of his programs?

DL: Some of them were awful.

DS: Why was that?

DL: Well, the government again was just spending too much money, and people were in trouble, and the banks were closing, and, oh, I'm sure he probably did alright. But I just, just didn't like his programs.

DS: I understand that there was a book written about your father-in-law. Can you tell me a little bit about it?

DL: Yes. It was a young man from the University of Illinois. My nephew, young John Parish and my son, Sharp Lannom, hired him to write this book. And he came, he came up to, he came to Grinnell, he went to Tullahoma, he went to places where the Lannom's had lived and interviewed people, interviewed many, many in Grinnell. And it's all in the book, and it's very interesting. And as I said, some parts I like, some parts I don't like.

DS: And the name of it is?

DL: *Visions of Worth*. See Worth Baseballs was the name of the baseballs.

DS: By Neil A. Hamilton.

DL: Uh-huh. Very nice young man. He spent a lot of time here, and he usually stayed with me.

DS: So you were in the book then?

DL: Oh, yes! Oh, yes. Because I had to interview Mr. Lannom to get my teaching job and I was the kind that blushed if anybody looked at me. And I interviewed him down in his office, never met him before, went in, sat in his office, across the desk. And so he started asking me questions. He said, "Now sell me. Tell me what you can do. Sell me." So I had my abstract and everything there. And finally he said, "Well, you're too good looking to be a school teacher." And of course I put my head on the desk and just blushed. [laughter] But I grew very fond of him.

DS: You turned out to be his daughter-in-law, so you passed the test.

DL: Yes, uh-huh, yes.

DS: What kind of a person was he?

DL: Well, he was a really smart man. He didn't delegate authority as much as he should have, I mean, it was hard on my husband to work for him. But they got along fine. And he was a really, really smart, intelligent man. Very fond of him. He was very active. He was on the school board and he was just a very, very good businessman. He didn't believe in owning property, because he felt the money should all be put back in the business. So we were surprised when we moved out here that he thought it was a good idea, because he thought the boys should be on the land. They should do something on the land. So we were pleased that he was pleased.

DS: What about his wife, your mother-in-law?

DL: Well, she was a lovely, lovely person. Of course, southern, very southern. The grandchildren always called her Mimi and she was kind to everybody and everybody loved her in Grinnell.

DS: Where did they live?

DL: Well, many places. As I say, they rented. When I first met Sharp, they lived in the Voertman home. It was called the Ricker House. It was, the glove factory was— One of the owners was Ricker, can't say the first name.

DS: B. J. Ricker.

DL: Yeah. They built, I don't know if they built the house, but it was, you know—it was Frank Lloyd Wright's protege [Ed. note: Walter Burley Griffin] that built the house. It was way ahead of its time. It had indirect lighting, it had a breezeway, it had a balcony off of each room, beautiful place. And Mr. Lannom could have bought that house for \$6,700. That was a lot of money in those days. And the porch was about to fall off and they had all copper tubing for all the plumbing and they were all encased in cement. So he knew what a job that would be to repair all that. As I say, he didn't believe in owning property. So then, they also lived, well, several other places. But the first place they lived when they came here was on Tenth Avenue, and it was on a corner and it had—it's kind of a bungalow and had a little cupola around the top. And one night, when my husband was just a little boy and they just moved there, his mother heard him, and he was going around all the windows. He was having a nightmare. He said, "Duck mother, the Indians are coming!" [laughter] They had probably gone to a movie or something. Oh, it's always a funny story.

DS: But you got along well with your in-laws?

DL: Oh, yes, very much, uh-huh. I liked them very much.

DS: Well, this book, then, will tell quite a bit about Grinnell, does it?

DL: Oh, yeah, it's interesting. But he was kind of hard on his son so, of course, those parts I don't like. Mr. Lannom was.

DS: Mr. Lannom was hard on his son?

DL: Yeah, uh-huh. But there's pictures and everything in here, so you'll enjoy it, I think.

DS: Well, thank you.

DL: Mr. Lannom hired people from Grinnell College to travel for him, Dick Seeland, Chuck Parish, A. B. Rosenbloom. The Rosenbloom Field is named for him, football field at the college. Well, many, many, many. Dick Potts worked for him, lots of people. And he was very fine, well-thought of man.

DS: It's interesting that he didn't believe in owning property.

DL: Well, he was so frugal in trying to get the business back in shape because it was in such bad shape that he, he didn't believe in owning property. He never did own property. A home, a home, a house, a home.

DS: But eventually then, did he buy the property, the business from Morrison-Shults?

DL: Uh-huh. And Ricker, if he was still involved. It'll tell you in there.

DS: I wanted to ask you a little bit about styles, women's styles. Have they, did they change much in the '30s? Was there any opportunity for women to change their –

DL: Well, they weren't – They were sort of long when I was teaching school. The dresses were kind of long. Because I have pictures. Just a simple dress was quite long. But then in the '30s, they were normal, they weren't real short and they weren't real long, they were just kind of mid-calf. And –

DS: But women did not wear slacks then?

DL: Not very much, no, no. You might wear jeans if you were painting or doing something.

DS: In the '30s?

DL: Uh-huh. Oh, yeah. I had jeans. But you didn't wear shorts much downtown, you didn't wear slacks, you didn't have slacks really. They started pants-suits, they called them, leisure suits. And they were a play-suit, I guess they called it, and they were just darling. They were short, and then you had a skirt, so if you went downtown, you would put the skirt around. And there were some just darling ones, I loved those. They're called play-suits.

DS: Did the war change styles at all?

DL: Yes, because after the war, during the war, they made things skimpy because they couldn't, didn't have enough material. And then after the war, they wanted to sell things, so the skirts were voluminous and sleeves were big, because then they wanted to spend money on materials.

DS: I've heard that nylon hose were hard to get during the war.

DL: Very, very.

DS: When were nylons invented, do you think?

DL: Oh, I don't really remember. Because the silk hose with the seam up the back was what you wore, so I don't really remember. I suppose in the '40s, nylon – DuPont probably invented nylon.

DS: And why were they better than silk hose?

DL: I don't know. They were probably more inexpensive, silk was very expensive. They probably lasted a little longer. I don't know.

DS: Silk would have had to been imported.

DL: I think so. I think they were quite expensive. I think.

DS: What about women's shoes?

DL: Well, as I say, we made sport shoes. And —

DS: Did you wear any yourself?

DL: Oh yes, and I used to, when the salesmen would all get together, I wore the right size, and I'd usually model them, because I love shoes. But shoes, they were fun. Of course, high heels if you were dressy, which I love, because I'm short. But the shoe business, the styles changed so, the last changed, so it's very hard to keep up if you're a small manufacturer like we were. So, it, just as I said, wasn't a lucrative job, at all. But we had one thing that happened at the shoe factory I thought was interesting. This — his name was Jensen, I think it was Paul, I'm not sure it was Paul, but Jensen. And he was blind, he could see light and you'd see him in the grocery store with his cane, looking at the light. But he worked on a machine that wasn't going to hurt him at the factory. And after all this case of shoes had gone through the whole factory, he realized that they were both lefts or rights. Nobody else caught it but him, which I thought was an interesting story at the time.

DS: His sense of touch.

DL: Uh-huh. He knew they were wrong, but he couldn't see them.

DS: You were talking about the sprinkler system.

DL: The sprinkler system went off when it shouldn't have at the shoe factory, there was water all every place. And they went out and just swept out shoes. You know, they were all wet and it was a mess.

DS: I'd call that a disaster.

DL: That was a disaster, yes, it was a mess. But otherwise, I can't think of any, oh, we've had some small tornadoes. Things like that, and those out here lost trees. But lots of wind, Grinnell has lots of wind, loses branches, but nothing big.

DS: Was your family pretty healthy through the years?

DL: Very, very.

DS: So you didn't have to see doctors for much of anything?

DL: No, huh-uh, just check-ups and shots and things like that. No, they were, we were very lucky. The boys, all of them played football, none of them had any broken bones. And we were lucky.

DS: Lucky. What shots did the kids get when they were growing up?

DL: Oh, diphtheria, tetanus, polio. There was a threesome, diphtheria, tetanus, and was it polio?

DS: Measles?

DL: Measles, maybe. And they all had those when they were young, and when they started school, they had to have booster shots. And, of course, you'd always get into trouble and have to have a tetanus shot, and out here we did plenty of that. But nothing serious.

DS: What about yourself? Did you have shots, do you recall, when you were growing up?

DL: I don't think so, I don't remember, I don't know, I don't think so. And I never take a flu shot, because I don't believe in 'em. So I just don't take shots.

DS: Do you remember any epidemic of say, scarlet fever, in Grinnell in the '30s?

DL: My son, Sharp, had scarlatina. We were quarantined when we lived in town, and had a sign on the door. And his eyes, he was twelve, just before we moved out here, and his – He had to wear glasses from then on. And you thought you were doing everything you were supposed to do, like keeping the blinds drawn, but that apparently affected him.

Side Three

DS: Getting back to the '30s again, I'm wondering about your kitchen facilities. Did you have an electric refrigerator?

DL: Oh, heavens, yes. And I had the first dishwasher in Grinnell, garbage disposal.

DS: When was that?

DL: Well, when we lived in the duplex. We moved there in 1936 and we moved in 1948 out here, so it was early on. And I didn't think we needed all those things, because I thought there were a lot of other things we needed more. Sharp said, "Well, I'm not going to help with the dishes unless we have to catch a train." [laughter] So we moved the dishwasher from there out here, the sink. And we had a garbage disposal, and we had a mangle to iron clothes.

DS: What was a mangle?

DL: To iron clothes, you know, a round machine that you'd put the shirts or diapers or tablecloths or anything, you just sat there. My grandmother lived to be ninety-three and she lived down the street with my mother and dad, and she'd come up and sit in the kitchen. And she'd say, "You have all kinds of conveniences but the most wonderful thing you have is this mangle." She'd sit there and watch me iron. It had a lid, you know, just like in the cleaners, except it was round, and it was heated.

Because she remembered heating the irons on a cook stove to iron. She thought that was the most wonderful convenience anybody could have.

DS: You ironed your diapers?

DL: I did. They made them so soft and nice, they were easy to fold. You sit there and let them run through, you know, it's no problem. And I'd do shirts, and I'd do tablecloths, and things like that.

DS: So you never had block ice that you used in a —

DL: No, not since I've been married. We did in Cedar Rapids, in our home, where you had to have the ice man bring the ice. No. Never.

DS: But did you remember seeing an ice man in Grinnell? Or did everyone have refrigerators?

DL: Oh, I think most people had refrigerators by then. I don't remember. I remember in Cedar Rapids, when they would feed it from outside, put the ice in outside, and mother would put a card in the window, and say, I want fifty pounds, or a hundred pounds, or whatever. And but, and then, another place that we lived in Cedar Rapids, the first place, where I was born, we would run after the ice truck, it would be drawn by horses. You know, because the ice, when he'd chip it, of course you'd eat it. It's a wonder we didn't all die. [laughter] Paul Engle lived right across the street from us.

DS: He did?

DL: His father had a stables, horses.

DS: This is Paul Engle, the Iowa poet.

DL: Paul Engle, the Iowa poet. He went to Coe College. And then he was a Rhodes Scholar. And he played with my sister, and I remember him very well as a young person. And I've seen him here.

DS: Did you keep up with him?

DL: Well, we he'd come to Grinnell and talk. And he was at the chapel not too many years ago with his Chinese wife, and I knew his first wife, Marion Nissen, she was in high school and Coe with me. But then he had this Chinese wife and she's lovely. And Evelina and Bill and I went to hear him, and Evelina could talk to his wife, and she was very lovely. But he was quite a man.

DS: He was. Do you remember anybody else important coming through Grinnell, say — You mentioned the rail — you mentioned not doing dishes, unless you were catching a train. Did you use the trains much?

DL: Oh, yes. You'd go to Chicago on the Rocket, it'd take six hours, which was fun, you know. And I never did go to Des Moines to shop, or things like that,

but I remember Sid saying that they'd go early in the morning, and the girls to shop, and come back at night. But about the only thing we did was go to Chicago.

DS: Would you go for a weekend?

DL: Oh, I suppose my husband had business, and I'd just go along, because I think Chicago's fun. I haven't been there for a long time.

DS: What were the trains like?

DL: Oh, they were very nice, clean, very nice. The Rocket was, that's before your time, isn't it? You never heard of the Rocket?

DS: No, I remember.

DL: Do you remember the Rocket? But they were very nice, they were clean. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Lannom were in Chicago to a sporting goods show or meeting of some sort, and they had Tom and Sharp come in on the train and stay at a hotel, which was a big thrill for them. The train ride by themselves was fun, and the conductor looked after them [laughter]. They had a wonderful time.

DS: They couldn't get in trouble on a train. They were there.

DL: No, they were there. Couldn't get off, unless they got off at a stop or something, you know. No, they got along fine.

DS: There were businesses along the the railroad track. You mentioned the hotel.

DL: Uh-huh, Monroe Hotel. Hiser, Mr. Hiser and Velma, well, you know Velma Hiser, he and his wife had that. And when Mrs. Lannom, Mr. Lannom's first wife died, Mr. Lannom had a, one of the apartments downstairs in the Monroe Hotel, and they were quite nice, nice big living room, bedroom, kitchen, bath, I don't think there was a kitchen. But, there were silver dollars in the floor of the hotel, do you remember that?

DS: I don't remember that.

DL: I always wondered, when they took it down and built the low-cost housing if they took those silver dollars out of the floor, I'm sure they did, whoever owned it.

DS: I suppose.

DL: I would think so.

DS: And was there a little restaurant there by the railroad track too?

DL: Yes, Sid Potts' mother ran the restaurant. And they had a wonderful dining room at the hotel. The man that was the baker, that made all the rolls and everything, cut gloves at the glove factory, which isn't very far. And, oh, their food

was outstanding, it was marvelous, it was just a treat to go down there Sunday and have dinner.

DS: Did people come from out of town to go for dinner there?

DL: Oh, I'm sure they did, because it was quite well known. I'm not sure that they did. But Mr. Lannom was living there, so we'd be down there most every Sunday for dinner. Went down one Sunday for dinner, and there was a note in his box. He'd had a heart attack and we were worried about him because he didn't answer his door. So we went back to the desk and he had left us a note. He had gone to, not Kansas City, oh, I can't think of the name of the place, to get married.

[laughter]

DS: That was your —

DL: That was my step-mother.

DS: Announcement?

DL: That was our announcement. We met her, she'd been here and we liked her very much and were happy for him, but we were so relieved that nothing had happened to him. So we had, he said, "Go ahead and have your dinner," so we did. Yeah, she was a love, Edith.

DS: Were most of families who were living here in the '30s people who had been living here a long time?

DL: Yes. I think so. Like the Richardsons, and the Shiffletts, and the Manlys, and, oh, you can go on and on. Yeah, there's lots of local Grinnell people. Maybe they'd come from some place else, but they'd been here a long time.

DS: The college was probably the main business that brought in people from other towns.

DL: Oh, I expect. And, of course, as we've said before, the college has made Grinnell. It's a completely different town than Newton because of the college, I think, the culture that it's brought. And most of us don't — oh, there's a robin — most of us don't take advantage of what's available at the college, which is too bad, but it's just too convenient.

DS: Do you remember any particular, did you ever go to any particular lecture at the college that was outstanding, or do you remember events —

DL: Well, I went when Paul Engle was there, and there were always concerts and plays, and there were lots of things that were available.

DS: What about high school plays and things? Did people attend those?

DL: Oh, yes. That was a good auditorium and a good stage if you recall. That's where they have the community players now. And of course, that's where we

had, when I was teaching, had our assemblies, and it was, it's a — there were lots of plays there. And of course the two theaters, the Iowa Theater and what's the other, name of the Capitol, I think, there were two theaters, one on the corner, and the other where it is now. And before my time, they had plays that would stop here coming from Chicago to Des Moines or from Des Moines to Chicago, wherever, well, like *Blossomtime* and big musicals, because the Iowa Theater had a good stage. And then the college would have plays there.

DS: So you didn't lack for entertainment?

DL: No, of course they didn't. That was before my time, all those things. But I remember when the Spaulding's and all the people, all the wealthy people, they used to tell stories how they would go to the theater in their buggies and all dressed up in their finery. And so it was quite a gay town.

DS: Well, yes. The car that you got around in, your husband's new car, what kind of car was that?

DL: It was a Plymouth coupe.

DS: A coupe?

DL: A coupe, uh-huh.

DS: Did it have a rumble seat?

DL: No, no, oh, no. But I remember rumble seats when I was in high school in Cedar Rapids. No, it was just a coupe, two door. [laughter]

DS: Did any politicians ever go through the town on the train?

DL: Oh, well, I remember Eisenhower. We had a stationwagon and had the tailgate down and we sat right by the glove factory and the train stopped right there. But you probably know that Gilmore, Eddie Gilmore, brought all these V.I.P.s when he was at the college, there was everybody you can think of, Truman, Eisenhower, well, every famous politician stayed at Grinnell House. You probably know all that.

DS: So you got to see them?

DL: Oh, yes, oh, yes. It was exciting. Goldwater.

DS: Did the school kids get to see them too?

DL: Well, I think so. They had, well, for instance, up at Darby Gym, they would have lots of chairs, you know. And I'm sure they did, just like not too long ago, George Bush was at the high school a few years ago. And I was there and all the kids got to see him and we got our pictures taken with him and so that was a big thrill for me.

DS: Speaking of pictures, did you have family photographs taken very often?

DL: Every other year, we'd have a— Lindy Wellhouse was the photographer here, and she would take Christmas pictures so for Christmas cards. And we did that many years. And we had a German AFS student live with us a year, so one year we had five boys instead of four. Sharp was at Northwestern when he was here. So we had, we always had family pictures.

DS: You talked about going on picnics as a family. Did many events take place in Central Park?

DL: I really don't know. I mean, if we went on a picnic, we'd kind of go out in the country, you know, to a woodsy place. I remember at the Jasper County line, there's a place to turn left and there was a nice picnic area up there. So I don't really know about Central Park. I think it's always been used. I love the gazebo.

DS: Were there band concerts back in the '30s?

DL: I don't remember a place for them to play, but then they could have set up chairs, could have been. I don't remember.

DS: What was Fourth of July like?

DL: Oh, they always had a parade downtown, just like they do now. And at the Country Club. And the kids rode bicycles, you know, and they always had Halloween events, little kids would dress up in costume and they'd have a place for them to go. That was more of course the later years than early on. I don't know how early they started that.

DS: What were your family traditions at Christmas? Did you carry on your family traditions, or did you adopt that Lannom family traditions?

DL: We did both, and when we lived in the duplex, one Christmas we'd have the dinner at my house, our house, the next, and they'd have the Christmas tree and all the kids' gifts, because we cut a door out between, so— And my husband was an avid movie taker, which almost ruined our Christmas because you had to be so careful of the cords and everything that was set up, you know, to take pictures. But now, and then, the next year we'd have the tree at our house and dinner at their house. And the Parish's and the Arnold's and the Lannom's and my mother and father, Williams, we had a big, big group. And now, my son, my son Tom is editing all these movies that my husband took and has them on tapes to give to everybody, and wants me to come and identify some of the people because he doesn't know who they all are. We always had an Easter egg hunt up at Dick Seeland's. Dick would, when the kids were little. So it's more fun to see Orpha and Earl Matthews, Willie and Sally Kearney, the Parishes, and the Ransoms. And Dick would hide all

these Easter eggs up there, and then we'd take our kids up and they'd all hunt Easter eggs. Did it for years.

DS: In his yard?

DL: In his yard, uh-huh.

DS: That was fun tradition.

DL: Oh, it was. And we've got movies of all of them, and these little kids, picking up an egg, and put it in their baskets, you know. So, I'm anxious for Tom to show them to me, but he sent tapes to Marty Parish and cousin Louise Jackson and he's got some for all of us.

DS: You really have fond memories then.

DL: Very, very. My husband died much too young, but otherwise it was a good life.

DS: He died in?

DL: 1961, he was forty-nine.

DS: He was young. When did your father-in-law die?

DL: He died when he was sixty-eight. He'd been to Puerto Rico on business and they were at a beach house, and he was telling a story, loved to tell stories, and he had a heart attack. And he had them before, he had other heart attacks. But my husband never had. So he died in Puerto Rico, Mr. Lannom.

DS: And what year was that?

DL: I can't remember.

DS: It was before your husband died?

DL: Oh, yes, uh-huh, yes, uh-huh.

DS: I wonder, Dorothy, about local politics.

DL: I think it's better now than it used to be, but I think at one point you couldn't get people, good people, to run because there was so much criticism. I remember Mr. Lannom was on the school board as well as on the city council and did a great deal in his time. But I don't know whether it's because people are too busy or whether they don't want to give it the time, but it seems to me that lots of times there aren't people that should be running. They just don't do anymore, which I think is too bad.

DS: And on a national level, do you think in the '30s that people were more accepting of what our national government did?

DL: Oh, I think so. But I think there was still a lot of activity in the, in politics in the '30s. I think people mostly have always been interested in what's happening. Least I hope so.

DS: Did you ever work in the polls?

DL: Oh, heavens, yes. I worked every way you could. I took a group of college students down to Victor one political year to get names that could vote, because Victor has part, parts in Iowa and parts in Poweshiek. It's cut kind of in half. And so, of course, we did the Poweshiek part. Well, we'd go down several days. I'd take a bunch of kids down, it was fun. They thought it was fun. And we'd call people, and say, do you need a ride to the polls, and find out what their politics were and ask questions. I did a lot of that.

DS: You did that in Victor. Did you do it in Grinnell, too?

DL: Well, yes I helped. My husband had lists in Grinnell and if you needed a ride you knew exactly who could pick you up and he was very active in the Republican party politics.

DS: So, did you become acquainted with the governors as they were running?

DL: Uh-huh. Governor Ray. And I went on an Iowa Development Commission with Governor Hughes.

DS: Where did you go?

DL: Went to the Far East.

DS: With Governor Hughes?

DL: And his family, his wife and his daughter. And we were going on trade commissions to do joint ventures and I went as a man, in 1966, and contacted all these different countries, Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, Bangkok, every place. And I would just talk with the people to see if they were interested in having a glove company over there in conjunction with us. And then I'd bring the cards and the information back to Sharp. And we decided to do it in Taiwan and we had a glove company there for several years.

DS: So you were really pretty active in the business?

DL: Well, not really, but I could talk with people and get their cards. Some of them I couldn't talk very well with, we'd have to have an interpreter, but I was, I've been not active, but I've been interested.

DS: You haven't been just sitting home.

DL: No, no. It's fun to go to the factory, because here the three sons are down there and they all come and gather around, and I enjoy that.

DS: Did you know much of what was going in the factory in the early days?

DL: No, and I still don't. People ask me what's this, what's that, I don't know. I could find out, but I don't know.

DS: You listened to radio in the '30s and '40s, but did you do much reading, and I wondered what magazines you've read.

DL: Well, we took *Time* and *Post* and *Reader's Digest* and *Ladies' Home Journal* and that type magazine, and I still do a lot of reading. If I don't do handwork, I read. I do a lot of handwork.

DS: Such as?

DL: Needlepoint, counted cross-stitch, afghans, quilts, embroidery.

DS: So, your home is full of things you've done.

DL: That's right.

DS: You have a lovely home here.

DL: Thank you.

DS: Well, thank you, Dorothy, very much, for doing this.

DL: Well, I enjoyed it. I hope it will sound interesting.

DS: I think — I'm sure it will.